ITACG: Enhancing First Responder Awareness

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State and local first responders play a critical role in protecting the homeland. On the frontlines of homeland security, first responders are important consumers of intelligence. The Interagency Threat Assessment & Coordination Group (ITACG) is a joint effort by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) to improve intelligence sharing with first responder communities by bringing a state and local perspective to the federal intelligence cycle. As a former ITACG Detailee, I firmly believe the program is vital to our nation?s homeland security.

ITACG duties include attending daily intelligence briefings and monitoring Intelligence Community databases to identify terrorism information which may be relevant to state, local, tribal, and private sector (SLTP) partners. Once intelligence is recognized as important to SLTP partners, ITACG works with analysts at DHS, FBI and NCTC to create intelligence products, including the Roll Call Release, a product developed by a former detailee. DHS and FBI then disseminate the products to appropriate SLTP partners, including fusion centers, so that they can be shared with all authorized public safety responders.

ITACG also developed and produced the Intelligence Guide for First Responders [3], a product to help first responders understand the basics of the intelligence cycle, intelligence analysis and available products. A second edition incorporating the feedback of federal, state, local and tribal partners will be released in the near future.

In the coming months, ITACG will publish a Guide for Public Safety Personnel. I worked with ITACG colleagues to develop this pocket-size guide to help public safety responders during day-to-day operations. The Guide covers a wide range of topics, including the terrorist planning cycle; signs of terrorism; indicators and warnings; terrorist tactics, techniques, and procedures; weapons of mass destruction and explosive threats; and fusion centers and suspicious activity reporting. The Guide is designed to help first responders in many different situations, and provides information that will remain relevant long after the product is published.

The Guide for Public Safety Personnel was developed in close coordination with DHS, FBI and NCTC. I hope this Guide will be a great reference for all first responders, providing a comprehensive resource that

will support public safety professionals in their daily operations.

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